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RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY 2842
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 000996

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/16/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GR](#) [MK](#)
SUBJECT: GREEK CONCERNS ABOUT ATTENDING GLOBAL INITIATIVE
WITH MACEDONIA

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas Countryman
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY. In separate meetings on May 16 with MFA
Secretary General Charalambos Rocanas and the Director of the

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D1 Directorate for the United Nations and International
Organizations Ambassador Fotis Xydas, DCM heard Greek
concerns about attending the Global Initiative (GI) to Combat
Nuclear Terrorism if Macedonia attends and is seated behind a
nameplate under its constitutional name: the Republic of
Macedonia. Both interlocutors told the DCM that under such
circumstances, it would be difficult for Greece to
participate at the level that it would like to and indicated
that it could mean political pain for the Greek government,
and especially for the FM, if it should do so. Rocanas noted
that the greatest danger is posed from resulting written
documents. He raised several questions and admitted that a
compromise could be found to preserve the dignity of both
participants. Post recommends a compromise that permits the
use of FYROM in all written documents (with a footnote
listing the names of the countries that recognize FYROM as
Macedonia) and the use of Macedonia on the written name
placard and in all oral discussions. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) On May 16, DCM and Alexey Rogalev, DCM at the Russian
Embassy in Athens, met with Ambassador Xydas, Director of the
D1 Directorate for the United Nations and International
Organizations to discuss Greek participation in the GI Astana
conference in June. Xydas clearly and cogently presented
Greek concerns that for Macedonia to attend the conference
under its constitutional name (The Republic of Macedonia)
would present great problems for the Greek government to
participate - at least at the levels of participation that it
had previously enQQS!#!\$" H!)b\$)!!Q%\$ Q(at Greece
understood Q(!Q Q(! UCC (!\$ %! % ! \$!cision to refer to the
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&!Q\$eR IQQDQ\$!Q Q%PQblic as Macedonia rather than FYROM in
its bilateral dealings with that country. Xydas remarked,
however, that because the documents establishing the GI make
reference to UN Security Council Resolutions 1373 and 1540,
the GI should be construed in accordance with other
UN-related international organizations and that Macedonia, in
such fora, was always referred to as FYROM. He saw no reason
to deviate from that practice in this instance. "It would be
extremely difficult for us to participate in an initiative
with a country that is recognized by its constitutional
name," and not its internationally accepted name, said Xydas,
adding, "we hope that you will understand our position and
not put us in a difficult situation." Xydas noted that at a

recent Warsaw PSI meeting -- an initiative he said that the Greeks saw as equally important as GI -- Greece raised this identical issue. In that instance, the Poles, he said, were skillfully and quietly able to address the matter with the Macedonians. Xydas claimed that the Macedonians "fully understood" and that the nameplate was changed to FYROM.

SECGEN MEETING

¶3. (C) On the same date, DCM also met with MFA Secretary General Rocanas to discuss a host of issues, including the GI name dilemma. Rocanas made plain that the real danger for the Greek government was from the written documents that would be published after or as a result of resolutions passed at the GI. "Documents which circulate can do a lot of damage," he said, adding, "already they are issuing papers, and this is how the matter came up." Rocanas also implied that it would be difficult for Greece to participate at an appropriately high level if FYROM were referred to as Macedonia in written documents. He said that the international community should refrain from using the constitutional name under these kinds of circumstances, "because it only renders them more intransigent." Rocanas also noted that both Greece and Macedonia need to understand that the GI was not the forum for resolving their differences, and he said that Greece wished to neither humiliate nor offend the Macedonians. "We want Skopje at the GI," he stated, "but we just don't want this occasion to be another one of friction."

¶4. (C) DCM told both Xydas and Rocanas that the U.S. was very aware of the sensitive nature of this issue for Greece. He indicated his understanding of the Greek position analogizing the GI to other UN-institutions or NATO but also noted that the GI was not specifically under the aegis of either organization. Moreover, he noted that similar complaints had been raised by Turkey about Cyprus even attending the GI. (NOTE: Xydas and Rocanas both scoffed at the comparison, arguing that they were completely different situations, especially, they countered, because Greece wanted FYROM to attend the GI, but simply did not want to take a domestic political blow in the process. END NOTE.) Highlighting that the GI was not the forum to resolve the Greek-Macedonia name dispute, DCM queried both whether there might be a possible compromise to be found, as had been the case in PSI meetings, with the written program using one version of the name and the seating placards using another -- or simply using country flags instead. Neither rejected such proposals out of hand.

QUESTIONS RAISED

¶5. (C) Rocanas and Xydas both voiced concern over the potential level of visibility the GI was anticipated to generate and asked about what press involvement was permitted at the last such meeting and what press availability there would be for the June Astana gathering. Specifically, Post would appreciate learning whether TV and/or still cameras will be permitted into the meeting room to film participants and whether this was done at the previous meeting. Have previous GI events generated press coverage? Does the GoK plan/anticipate a public profile for the Astana event?

¶6. (C) The recent accession of both Greece and Macedonia to the GI forces an almost 'theological' question as to the nature of the Global Initiative, to wit: to what extent is this initiative analogous to other United Nations-related initiatives or is it to be considered sui generis for purposes of developing rules of procedure, e.g., like the Proliferation Security Initiative?

COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

¶7. (C) Post fully recognizes that for Washington and Moscow the point is not to resolve the Greece-Macedonia name issue -- but that a quiet compromise on the matter before the June

Astana meeting would help ensure broad and high-level participation at this, and for future GI discussions. In our view, Greece is reasonably presenting the real political risks to the government -- only months away from national elections -- in sitting across the table from a nameplate labeled 'Republic of Macedonia' and/or signing onto documents as a full partner under that name. We propose that the written program and all resulting documents for the GI list Macedonia as FYROM (with a footnote listing the names of the countries that recognize FYROM as Macedonia) but that their country table-placard and in all oral discussions shall be referred to simply as Macedonia by all parties except Greece.

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